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News Release ~ Communiqué

Historic Prince of Wales Hotel commemorated

Waterton Lakes National Park, July 23, 1995 - In a ceremony held today, Senator Joyce Fairbairn, along with honoured dignitaries and guests, officially commemorated the Prince of Wales Hotel, in recognition of its national historic and architectural significance. The announcement was made on behalf of the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the Honourable Michel Dupuy.

In November of 1992, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada recommended that the hotel be commemorated. Today's plaque presentation and ceremony were the result of a cooperative effort by the Department of Canadian Heritage, Parks Canada, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and Glacier Park Incorporated, which presently owns and manages the hotel.

The commemoration of the Prince of Wales Hotel, which figures so prominently in the history of Waterton Lakes National Park was especially fitting as it is the parks's centennial year.

Interpretive displays, musical entertainment and scenic boat tours were all part of the festivities designed to highlight the grand era of large-scale resorts which were among the forerunners of organized tourism in the national parks.

The Prince of Wales Hotel was built during the years of 1926 and 1927 as the sole Canadian link in a chain of Great Northern Railway resorts. This hotel and those in Glacier National Park, Montana were all part of a visionary concept to bring visitors to the Rocky Mountains. Louis Hill, son of the founder of the Great Northern Railway, championed the creation of the Canadian hotel and gathered concepts related to architectural design during his travels in Europe.

The actual construction of the building fell to two local contractors, Doug Oland and Jim Scott of Cardston, Alberta . Poor roads, great distances from suppliers, wet and windy weather and last minute changes to the building plans were some of the obstacles faced and overcome by the contractors and construction crews. The hotel opened on July 25, 1927, only slightly behind schedule.

The architectural style of the building lacks a clear definition but its Swiss chalet lines and open frame timbers make it unique and appealing. Its presence on the hill overlooking the townsite of Waterton makes it the most prominent man-made structure in a valley of deep glacier carved lakes and jagged peaks.

The hotel has operated continuously since its opening except for an interruption during the great depression and again near the end of the Second World War. The Prince of Wales Hotel is currently operated by Glacier Park Incorporated who also manage hotels in Glacier National Park, Montana.

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada advises the Minister of Canadian Heritage concerning the commemoration of people, events or places of national significance in Canadian history.

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